

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05  
IGA-02 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00  
DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05  
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /083 W  
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O R 141636Z JUL 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9110  
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN  
AMEMBASSY LAGOS  
AMEMBASSY LOME  
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 5367

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PGOV, GH  
SUBJ: SMC SETS TIME-TABLE FOR RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE

REF: ACCRA 5348

LONDON FOR SEITZ

1. SUMMARY: REACTING TO INCREASING CIVILIAN PRESSURE,  
SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL (SMG) HAS PROMISED GHANA  
WILL BE RETURNED TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT BY JULY 1,  
1979. INITIAL PUBLIC REACTION TO OFFER HAS BEEN NEGATIVE;  
WE THINK IT MAY BE TOO LITTLE AND TOO LATE.  
FURTHER PRESSURE TO SHORTEN TIME-FRAME FOR RETURN TO  
CIVILIAN RULE IS INEVITABLE. END SUMMARY.

2. READIO AND PRESS JULY 14 CARRY SMC STATEMENT  
RELEASED LATE JULY 13 WHICH GIVES FOLLOWING TIME-TABLE  
FOR RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE:

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ACTIVITY	TIME
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COMPILATION OF VOTERS' REGISTERS.	AUG 1, 1977 TO JAN 31, 1978
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PUBLICATION OF LAWS RELATING TO CONDUCT OF REFERENDUM	AUGUST 30 1977
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COMPLETION AND SUBMISSION OF  
REPORT OF AD HOC COMMITTEE ON  
UNION OR NATIONAL GOVERNMENT      SEPT 30, 1977

REFERENDUM      MARCH 30, 1978

APPOINTMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL      LAST WEEK OF  
COMMISSION TO DRAFT RELEVANT

CONSTITUTION FOR CONSIDERATION      APRIL 9 1978  
BY CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

SUBMISSION OF DRAFT CONSTITUTION BY      END OF  
CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION.      NOVEMBER )1978

COMPLETION OF WORK OF CONSTITUENT      EARLY MARCH 1979  
ASSEMBLY.

GENERAL ELECTIONS      JUNE 15, 1979

INDUCTION INTO OFFICE OF NEW  
GOVERNMENT.      JULY 1, 1979

3. STATEMENT ALSO REPORTS GOG HAS APPOINTED MR.  
JUSTICE I.K. ABBAN, HIGH COURT JUDGE, AS ELECTORAL  
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COMMISSIONER TO HANDLE REFERENDUM AND GENERAL ELECTION.  
(ABBAN, BORN MAY 1933 IN CENTRAL REGION, READ LAW IN  
UK AND WAS CALLED TO BAR IN 1958. RETURNING TO GHANA  
IN 1959, HE PRACTICED AS A LAWYER IN CAPE COAST  
BEFORE BEING APPOINTED IN 1970 AS A JUDGE OF HIGH  
COURT.) ALTHOUGH GRAPHIC AND TIMES GIVE TURNOVER STORY  
BANNER HEADLINES, EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS CURIOUSLY MUTED.  
GRAPHIC RAN ONLY HALF-COLUMN COMMENT ON CONSTITUTIONAL  
RULE, ARGUING THAT "WHAT IS NEEDED NOW IS AN UNINTERRUPTED  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROGRAMME. THIS WILL DEMAND  
PEACE AND STABILITY, FOR NOTHING GOOD CAN BE ACHIEVED  
IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF CHAOS AND CONFUSION." TIMES,  
USUALLY AN OUTSPOKEN SUPPORTER OF NEW GOG POLICIES,  
DID NOT HAVE AN EDITORIAL JULY 14. IT ALSO RAN  
A MODERATELY ANTI-UNION GOVERNMENT ARTICLE BY AN  
ACTIVIST OF THE GHANA BAR ASSOCIATION, A BREAK FROM  
ITS PAST PRACTICE OF IGNORING SUCH HERESIES.

4. INITIAL REACTION IN ACCRA TO THIS PROPOSED TWO-YEAR  
TURNOVER  
AS BEEN HIGHLY NEGATIVE. WE EXPECT  
PROFESSIONAL BODIES ASSOCIATION, SLATED TO MEET WITH

SMC MORNING JULY 14, WILL MAKE THIS POINT STRONGLY, AND DEMAND A MUCH EARLIER TRANSFER OF POWER. WHEHTER ACHEAMPONG WILL BACK DOWN FROM THIS POSITION AND PERHAPS OFFER A QUICKER TURNOVER REMAINS TO BE SEEN. IN ANY CASE, GOG HAS FOR THE FIRST TIME COMMITTED ITSELF TO A SPECIFIC TIMETABLE, CLEARLY IN RESPONSE TO MOUNTING PRESSURES.

5. THERE ARE SOME OTHER HINTS THE GOVERNMENT'S CONFIDENCE MAY BE ERODING. ONE REPORT ASSERTS THAT ACHEAMPONG AND SOME OF HIS SMC COLLEAGUES, SHAKEN BY RECENT EVENTS, NOW WISH TO FIND A GRACEFUL WAY TO STEP DOWN, ON THE CONDITION THAT A NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT RPT NOT INVESTIGATE THEIR FINANCES OR OTHER CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTIVITIES WHILE THEY WERE IN OFFICE. OTHER SOURCES SAY THE FIRST STEP IN A POST-ACHEAMPONG GOVERNMENT (ASSUMING THE CHAIRMAN STEPS DOWN OR IS REMOVED IN NEAR FUTURE) WOULD BE THE FORMATION OF A "PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION" CONSISTING OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE, THE ASANTEHENE, A REP OF THE CHRISTIAN COUNCIL, A MUSLIM REP, A GA CHIEF AND REPS FROM OTHER MAJOR RELIGIONS. THIS COMMISSION WOULD OVERSEE TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN RULE. DETAILS OF HOW THIS WOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED, HOW SOON, AND WHAT ROLE THE ARMED FORCES WOULD PLAY ARE

ALL LACKING.

6. COMMENT: IN OUR VIEW, THE PROFESSIONALS WILL NOT RPT NOT ACCEPT A TWO YEAR DELAY IN THE TRANSFER OF POWER. NOT APPEAR TO CONSIDER EVEN A ONE YEAR TRANSITION PERIOD EXCESSIVE. SIX MONTHS--I.E., TO THE END OF 1977--WOULD PROBABLY BE ACCEPTABLE TO MANY OF THE OLDER AND MORE MODERATE PROFESSIONALS, BUT THEY MIGHT HAVE TROUBLE KEEPING THEIR YOUNGER COLLEAGUES IN LINE. WE EXPECT NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE

QUESTION OF TIMING WILL BE PROTRACTED, ACrimonious AND PRONE TO FREQUENT BREAKDOWNS.  
SMITH

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NNN



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